

Rajasthani language

Rajasthani (Devanagari: राजस्थानी) refers to a group of Indo-Aryan languages and dialects spoken primarily in the state of Rajasthan and adjacent areas of Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh in India. There are also Rajasthani-speakers in the Pakistani provinces of Sindh and Punjab.^[4] The Rajasthani language is distinct from neighbouring related Hindi languages as it is a western Indo-Aryan language.

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History

Rajasthani has a literary tradition going back approximately 1500 years. The ancient astronomer and mathematician Brahmagupta of Bhinmal composed the *Brāhmasphuṭasiddhānta*. In 779 AD, Udhyotan Suri wrote the Kuvalaya Mala partly in Prakrit and partly in Apabhraṃśa. Maru-Gurjar or Maruwani or Gujjar Bhakha (1100–1500 AD), ancestor of Gujarati and Rajasthani, was spoken by the Gurjars in Gujarat and Rajasthan.^[5] Texts of this era display characteristic Gujarati features such as direct/oblique noun forms, post-positions, and auxiliary verbs. It had three genders as Gujarati does today. During the medieval period, the literary language split away from Gujarati.

By around 1300 CE a fairly standardised form of this language emerged. While generally known as Old Gujarati, some scholars prefer the name of Old Western Rajasthani, based on the argument that Gujarati and Rajasthani were not distinct at the time. Also factoring into this preference was the belief that modern Rajasthani sporadically expressed a neuter gender, based on the incorrect conclusion that the [ũ] that came to be pronounced in some areas for masculine [o] after a nasal consonant was analogous to Gujarati's neuter [ũ]. A formal grammar of the precursor to this language was written by Jain monk and eminent scholar Hemachandra Suri in the reign of Solanki king Jayasimha Siddharaja. Maharana Kumbha wrote *Sangeet Raj*, a book on musicology and a treatise on Jai Deva's Geet Govinda.

Classification

Rajasthani	
राजस्थानी <div>Rājasthānī</div>	
Native to	India
Region	Rajasthan
Ethnicity	Rajasthanis
<div>Native speakers</div>	50 million (2011) ^[1]
<div>Language family</div>	<div>Indo-European <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indo-Iranian<ul style="list-style-type: none">Indo-Aryan<ul style="list-style-type: none">Western^[2]<ul style="list-style-type: none">Rajasthani</div>
<div>Early form</div>	<div>Prakrit</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-2	raj (https://ww w.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?code_ID=369)
ISO 639-3	<div>raj – inclusive code <div>Individual codes:</div> <div>bgq – Bagri</div> <div>gda – Gade</div> <div>Lohar</div> <div>gju – Gujar</div> <div>mki – Dhatki</div> <div>mup – Malvi</div> <div>wbr – Wagdi</div> <div>hoj – Hadothi</div> <div>lmn – Lambadi</div> <div>lrk – Loarki</div> <div>noe – Nimadi</div> </div>

The Rajasthani languages belong to the Western Indo-Aryan language family. However, they are controversially conflated with the Hindi languages of the Central-Zone in the Indian national census, among other places. The varieties of the Rajasthani language are:^[6]

- **Standard Rajasthani:** the common lingua franca of Rajasthani people and is spoken by over 18 million people (2001) in different parts of Rajasthan.^[7] It has to be taken into consideration, however, that some speakers of Standard Rajasthani are conflated with Hindi speakers in the census.
- **Marwari:** the most spoken Rajasthani language with approximately 45 to 50 million speakers situated in the historic Marwar region of western Rajasthan. The 2001 census, however, records only 7.9 million speakers. Like Standard Rajasthani, many Marwari speakers are conflated with Hindi speakers in the census.
- **Malvi:** approximately 10 million speakers in the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Dhundhari:** approximately 8 million speakers in the Dhundhar region of Rajasthan.
- **Harauti:** approximately 4 million speakers in the Hadoti region of Rajasthan.
- **Mewari:** approximately 5 million speakers in the Mewar region of Rajasthan.
- **Ahirwati:** approximately 3 Million speakers in the Ahirwal regions, comprising Haryana, Delhi and Rajasthan.
- **Shekhawati:** approximately 3 million speakers in the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan.
- **Wagdi:** approx 2.2 million speakers, spoken mainly in southern region which include Dungarpur & Banswara districts also called Wagad region.
- **Bagri:** approximately 1.4 million speakers in northern Rajasthan and northwestern Haryana. There are also speakers situated in southern Punjab.
- **Nimadi:** approximately 2.2 million speakers in the Nimar region of Madhya Pradesh.
- Other Rajasthani languages are Dhatki, Godwari, Gujari, Gurgula, Goaria and Lambadi.

Geographical distribution

Most of the Rajasthani languages are chiefly spoken in the state of Rajasthan but are also spoken in Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab. Rajasthani languages are also spoken in the Bahawalpur and Multan sectors of the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Tharparkar district of Sindh. It merges with Riasti and Saraiki in Bahawalpur and Multan areas, respectively. It comes in contact with Sindhi from Dera Rahim Yar Khan through Sukkur and Ummerkot. This language is common in many areas of Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Many linguists (Shackle, 1976 and Gusain, 2000) agree that it shares many phonological (implosives), morphological (future tense marker and negation) and syntactic features with Riasti and Saraiki. A distribution of the geographical area can be found in 'Linguistic Survey of India' by George A. Grierson.

Official status

Today, both India's National Academy of Letters, the Sahitya Akademi^[8], and its University Grants Commission recognize Rajasthani as a distinct language, and it is taught as such in both Jodhpur's Jai Narain Vyas University and Udaipur's Mohanlal Sukhadia University. The state Board of Secondary Education included Rajasthani in its course of studies, and it has been an optional subject since 1973. National recognition has lagged, however.

In 2003, the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly passed a unanimous resolution to insert recognition of Rajasthani into the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. In May 2015, a senior member of the pressure group Rajasthani Bhasha Manyata Samiti, said at a New Delhi press conference: “Twelve years have passed, but there has absolutely been no forward movement.”^[9]

All 25 Members of Parliament elected from Rajasthan state,^[9] as well as Rajasthan's Chief Minister, Vasundhara Raje Scindia,^[10] have also voiced support for official recognition of the language.

Writing system

In India, Rajasthani is written in the Devanagari script, an abugida which is written from left to right. Earlier, the Mahajani script, or Muriya, was used to write Rajasthani. In Pakistan, where Rajasthani is considered a minor language,^[11] a variant of the Sindhi script is used to write Rajasthani dialects.^{[12][13]}

Salient features

In common with most other Indo-Iranian languages, the basic sentence typology is subject–object–verb. On a lexical level, Rajasthani has perhaps a 50 to 65 percent overlap with Hindi, based on a comparison of a 210-word Swadesh list. Most pronouns and interrogative words differ from Hindi, but the language does have several regular correspondences with, and phonetic transformations from, Hindi. The /s/ in Hindi is often realized as /h/ in Rajasthani — for example, the word ‘gold’ is /sona/ (सोना) in Hindi and /hono/ (होनो) in the Marwari dialect of Rajasthani. Furthermore, there are a number of vowel substitutions, and the Hindi /l/ sound (ल) is often realized in Rajasthani as a retroflex lateral /ɭ/ (ळ).

Phonology

Rajasthani has 10 vowels and 31 consonants. The Rajasthani language Bagri has developed three lexical tones: low, mid and high.^[14]

Vowels				Consonants												
				Bilabial		Labio-dental	Dental/Alveolar		Retroflex		Post-alv./Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
	Front	Central	Back	Nasal	m			n		ɳ						
Close	i		u	Plosive	p	b		ɖ	ɗ	ʈ	ʑ			k	g	
	ɪ		ʊ		pʰ	bʰ		ɖʰ	ɗʰ	ʈʰ	ʑʰ			kʰ	gʰ	
Mid	e	ə	o	Affricate								tʃ	dʒ			
	ɛ							tʃʰ	dʒʰ							
Open		ɑ		Fricative			s				ʃ					h
				Tap or Flap				r	ɽ							
				Approximant			ʋ	l	ɭ ^[15]		j					

Morphology

Rajasthani has two numbers and two genders with three cases. Postpositions are of two categories, inflexional and derivational. Derivational postpositions are mostly omitted in actual discourse.^[16]

Syntax

- Rajasthani belongs to the languages that mix three types of case marking systems: nominative – accusative: transitive (A) and intransitive (S) subjects have similar case marking, different from that of transitive object (O); absolutive-ergative (S and O have similar marking, different from A), tripartite (A, S and O have different case marking). There is a general tendency existing in the languages with split nominal systems: the split is usually conditioned by the referents of the core NPs, the probability of ergative marking increasing from left to right in the following nominal hierarchy: first person pronouns – second person pronouns – demonstratives and third person pronouns – proper nouns – common nouns (human – animate – inanimate).^[17] Rajasthani split case marking system partially follows this hierarchy: first and second person pronouns have similar A and S marking, the other pronouns and singular nouns are showing attrition of A/S opposition.
- Agreement: 1. Rajasthani combines accusative/tripartite marking in nominal system with consistently ergative verbal concord: the verb agrees with both marked and unmarked O in number and gender (but not in person — contrast Braj). Another peculiar feature of Rajasthani is the split in verbal concord when the participial component of a predicate agrees with O-NP while the auxiliary verb might agree with A-NP. 2. Stative participle from transitive verbs may agree with the Agent. 3. Honorific agreement of feminine noun implies masculine plural form both in its modifiers and in the verb.
- In Hindi and Punjabi only a few combinations of transitive verbs with their direct objects may form past participles modifying the Agent: one can say in Hindi: ‘Hindii siikhaa aadmii’ – ‘a man who has learned Hindi’ or ‘saaRii baadhii auraa’ – ‘a woman in sari’, but *‘kitaab paRhaa aadmii’ ‘a man who has read a book’ is impossible. Semantic features of verbs whose perfective participles may be used as modifiers are described in (Dashchenko 1987). Rajasthani seems to have less constraints on this usage, compare bad in Hindi but normal in Rajasthani.

- Rajasthani has retained an important feature of ergative syntax lost by the other representatives of Modern Western New Indo-Aryan (NIA), namely, the free omission of Agent NP from the perfective transitive clause.
- Rajasthani is the only Western NIA language where the reflexes of Old Indo-Aryan synthetic passive have penetrated into the perfective domain.
- Rajasthani as well as the other NIA languages shows deviations from Baker's 'mirror principle', that requires the strict pairing of morphological and syntactic operations (Baker 1988). The general rule is that the 'second causative' formation implies a mediator in the argument structure. However, some factors block addition of an extra agent into the causative construction.
- In the typical Indo-Aryan relative-correlative construction the modifying clause is usually marked by a member of the "J" set of relative pronouns, adverbs and other words, while the correlative in the main clause is identical with the remote demonstrative (except in Sindhi and in Dakhini). Gujarati and Marathi frequently delete the preposed "J" element. In Rajasthani the relative pronoun or adverb may also be deleted from the subordinate clause but – as distinct from the neighbouring NIA – relative pronoun or adverb may be used instead of correlative.
- Relative pronoun 'jakau' may be used not only in relative/correlative constructions, but also in complex sentences with "cause/effect" relations.^[18]

Prominent linguists

Linguists and their work and year: [Note: Works concerned only with linguistics, not with literature]

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- Anvita Abbi: Bagri, 1993
- Christopher Shackle: Bagri and Saraiki, 1976
- David Magier: Marwari, 1983
- George Abraham Grierson : Almost all the dialects of Rajasthani, 1920
- George Macalister: Dhundhari and Shekhawati, 1892
- Gopal Parihar: Bagri, 2004–present
- John D. Smith: Rajasthani, 1970–present
- J. C. Sharma: Gade lohar, Bagri or Bhili, Gojri, 1970–present
- Kali Charan Bahl: Rajasthani, 1971–1989
- K. C. Agrawal: Shekhawati, 1964
- L. P. Tessitori: Rajasthani and Marwari, 1914–16
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- Narottam Das Swami: Rajasthani and Marwari, 1960
- Peter E. Hook: Rajasthani and Marwari, 1986
- Ram Karan Asopa: Rajasthani and Marwari, 1890–1920
- Sita Ram Lalas: Rajasthani language, 1950–1970
- Saubhagya Singh Shekhawat Rajasthani, : Rajasthani Shabd-Kosh part I Sanshodhan Parivardhan, 1945–present
- Suniti Kumar Chatterjee: Rajasthani, 1948–49
- W.S. Allen: Harauti and Rajasthani, 1955–60

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See also

- [List of Rajasthani Poets](#)
- [Rajasthani literature](#)
- [Rajasthani people](#)

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External links

- Mahajani script (<https://www.unicode.org/L2/L2011/11274-n4126-mahajani.pdf>)
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